DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 205 CE 066 798

AUTHOR	Mercer, John W.; Meunier, Greg R.
TITLE	Fifty Indices of Effectiveness Regarding the Program Advisory Committees in Minnesota's Technical Colleges: A Working Paper. Effective Advisory Committees Project.
INSTITUTION	Minnesota State Council on Vocational Technical Education, St. Paul.
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	27p.; Prepared by the Task Force on Effective Advisory Committees in the Technical Colleges.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Advisory Committees; *Evaluation Criteria; Meetings; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Statewide Planning; *Technical Institutes; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Minnesota

ABSTRACT

This document, which was developed by a task force whose members represent the instructional, student support service, administrative, and executive ranks of technical colleges with very diverse sizes, locations, and programs, lists 50 proposed indices of effectiveness regarding the program advisory committees (ACs) in Minnesota's technical colleges. The indices are divided in a manner designed to suggest a working format for the development of a leadership guide that will eventually be written to train AC members to plan and implement comprehensive curricular reviews. Specifically, the 50 indices of effectiveness are organized as follows: organizing an AC (purpose, function, structure, policy, practice); helping AC members become acquainted (relationship building); maintaining AC vitality by establishing definite member life-cycles and considering specified criteria when selecting members (occupational expertise, industry perspective, peer recognition, commitment, diversity); working together as a group to solve problems, make decisions, plan, forecast trends, and anticipate the future (knowledge/skills, facilitator competencies, group ownership); planning and conducting effective AC meetings; and developing an AC work plan. Appended is the task force membership roster. Contains 14 references. (MN)

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State Council on
Vocational Technical Education
STATE OF MINNESOTA

ED 372 205

Effective Advisory Committees Project

FIFTY INDICES OF EFFECTIVENESS REGARDING THE PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN MINNESOTA'S TECHNICAL COLLEGES: A WORKING PAPER

A report of the State Council on Vocational Technical Education by the Task Force on Effective Advisory Committees in the Technical Colleges

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Prepared by
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1991

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NOTES ON THE EFFECTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEES PROJECT

This report is a product of the Effective Advisory Committees Project. The project is an initiative of the State Council on Vocational Technical Education, undertaken in collaboration with the State Board of Education and the State Board of Technical Colleges. The purpose of this project is to increase the effectiveness of the vocational advisory committees in Minnesota's high schools, secondary cooperative centers, and technical colleges.

This project comprises four major sets of complementary activities. They involve (1) *evaluation* of the operations of vocational advisory committees, (2) development and dissemination of *resource materials* for these committees, (3) targeting of *professional development* activities relative to committee operations, and (4) *policy development* to achieve stronger advisory committee systems in the high school programs and technical colleges.

This report, which focuses on the technical colleges, represents a major step in the activity to develop resource materials and to target professional development needs. In doing so, it draws heavily on evaluation findings and suggests the tenor of forthcoming policy recommendations. The Council also is addressing a similar set of issues and concerns for the high school programs in Minnesota. That work is scheduled to be reported separately.

This report was prepared for the Task Force on Effective Advisory Committees in the Technical Colleges by John W. Mercer and Greg R. Meunier. Dr. Mercer is the Executive Director of the State Council on Vocational Technical Education. Mr. Meunier is the Special Assistant to the Chancellor of the Minnesota Technical College System. The Council appreciates the active support and collaboration of the Chancellor, the Board, and the colleges of the Minnesota Technical College System in carrying out this work.

COUNCIL PROLOGUE

The State Council on Vocational Technical Education commends and expresses its gratitude to its Task Force on Effective Advisory Committees in the Technical Colleges for the outstanding contribution it is making to strengthen vocational technical education in Minnesota. The Council cites specifically this task force report on the indices of effectiveness addressing program advisory committees in the technical colleges.

The indices contained in this report provide a clear, comprehensive conceptualization of the nature, role, behavior, services, and products desired of program advisory committees in the technical colleges. The task force succinctly states that the purpose of an effective program advisory committee is to provide "on-going evaluation and consultation on the curriculum." Why? "To keep it current with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values identified by industry representatives as being necessary for students to learn and use in order to work effectively in their chosen fields." An industry prescribed-and-validated curriculum—not one prescribed and validated by any other source—is the objective. All other indices are secondary to this keystone index.

The short-range and long-term benefits of this task force report are readily apparent. The immediate benefit is that the report paves the way for the writing of the leadership guide and member handbook for the Effective Advisory Committees Project. These two documents are to provide the reader with the basic information that he or she needs to achieve each index.

Regarding the long-term, this report, moreover, makes contributions of major consequence. First, the report with its keystone index heightens the pivotal role of program advisory committees in strengthening the capacity of the colleges to better serve students and employers. This pivotal role provides critical informational resources to the colleges to address customer expectations and to seek continuous improvement through on-going curricular review and development.

In addition to the support role these committees may play in

achieving and sustaining total quality management, the report sharpens the focus on program advisory committees as an integral component of collegiate planning. In the second index describing the committee function, the task force addresses this point when it suggests that, if the committee is not integral to the collegiate planning operation, its effectiveness is diminished.

Third, the report suggests the advantages, if not the necessity, for the Board and colleges to take additional deliberate steps to augment and formalize alliances, partnerships, and other mutually-beneficial working relationships with agriculture, business, industry, and labor.

The task force completed this report on 18 December 1990. The Council adopted the report and expressed its commendations to the task force on 8 January 1991.

JWM:mkh
01/08/91

TASK FORCE INTRODUCTION

The Task Force on Effective Advisory Committees in the Technical Colleges is an advisory group to the State Council on Vocational Technical Education. Established during September 1989, the task force is charged with advising the Council (a) on the development of a leadership guide and member handbook and (b) on the development of policy recommendations regarding advisory committees in the technical colleges.

Members of this task force were recruited and selected on the basis of their interest, knowledge, and commitment to the continuous improvement of advisory committees in the technical colleges. These recruitment and selection processes were played out in consultation with a broad spectrum of interests in the technical colleges. Members were recruited and selected to be representative of the range of instructional programs; college size, location, and program mix; and the instructional, student support service, administrative, and executive ranks of both the technical colleges and the State Board of Technical Colleges. The task force also includes representation of the state's teacher education institutions. (See Appendix.)

This working paper on indices of effectiveness relative to instructional programs is the first report of the task force. These indices of effectiveness are designed to describe the outcomes, attributes, and behaviors sought in advisory committees for instructional programs. The indices describe attainable, appropriate, and necessary characteristics for these committees. According to the task force, these indices embody the essential benchmarks that are necessary for developing the leadership guide, member handbook, and policy recommendations.

The sections into which the indices are divided in this report suggest a working format for the development of the leadership guide. In other words, the indices of effectiveness are seen as being the organizing elements for the leadership guide, with instructional materials to be developed to assist the reader in achieving each index. Writing the leadership guide, the next

major task, subjects these 50 indices to further evaluation and modification.

Furthermore, the writing of the leadership guide will include development of a description by the task force of the key elements and processes that constitute a comprehensive curricular review. The objective of developing this particular material is to give the committees the guidance they need to carry out comprehensive curricular reviews that result in appropriate and timely curricular modification and development.

Once the task force is comfortable with its progress relative to instructional program advisory committees, it plans to turn its attention to general advisory committees and other committees that advise other administrative and student support service functions. The task force found that the job of clarifying issues and defining roles for advisory committees required that committees with different purposes be approached separately. It elected to address instructional program advisory committees first.

FIFTY INDICES OF EFFECTIVENESS

I. Organizing an Advisory Committee: Purpose, Function, Structure, Policy, and Practice

Purpose

1. An effective advisory committee provides ongoing evaluation and consultation on the curriculum to keep it current with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values identified by industry representatives as being necessary for students to learn and use in order to work effectively in their chosen fields.

Function

2. An effective advisory committee functions as an integral component of the collegiate structure and process for planning and continuous improvement.

3. An effective advisory committee articulates long-term goals and objectives for the program.

Structure

4. The size and composition of an effective advisory committee are appropriate to meet the educational, economic, social, and cultural obligations of the program and the college.

5. An effective advisory committee provides for an appointment process and rotational membership with

an established proportion of the appointments expiring each year.

6. An effective advisory committee meets often enough:

   a. to give the members opportunities to become acquainted, establish working relationships, and develop a sense of community; and

   b. to develop, implement, and evaluate all aspects of the committee's biennial workplan designed to provide evaluation and consultation for the program's continuous curricular development and renewal (see Index 50).

7. An effective advisory committee annually elects a chair and vice chair who are representative of industry and not employed by the college.

8. An effective advisory committee has adequate and appropriate administrative and clerical staffing to achieve its purpose in a timely fashion.

9. An effective advisory committee operates under collegiate policy and procedures that define:

   a. the purpose of program advisory committees;

   b. committee size, composition, and diversity;

   c. the appointment process, terms of membership, and rotation of staggered membership;

   d. the annual election of the committee chair and vice chair who are representative of industry; and

   e. the process for the committee's presentation and the college's response to all committee recommendations for continuous curricular improvement.

II. Helping the Committee Members Become Acquainted: First Things First

Relationship Building

10. An effective advisory committee knows, understands, and uses appropriate relationship-building exercises.

III. Keeping the Blood New: Life Cycles of Committees and Members

Member Life Cycles

Member recruitment, selection, appointment, and retirement

11. Members of an effective advisory committee are recruited, selected, appointed, and retired on the basis of established criteria.

Member orientation

12. New and continuing advisory committee members are regularly provided with formal orientation relative to the committee purpose, function, structure, and goals and objectives as expressed in the committee workplan (see Index 50).

Member participation

13. Members of an effective advisory committee, in advising on the curriculum, regularly attend committee meetings, share their occupational expertise, and inform the program of current and future industry needs.

Member development

14. Members of an effective advisory committee take advantage of opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills to improve their effectiveness.

Member evaluation

15. Members of an effective advisory committee regularly evaluate their individual performances and use the information for continuous improvement.

Member recognition

16. Members of an effective advisory committee are formally recognized for their contributions to the continuous improvement of the program.

Member Selection Criteria

Occupational expertise

17. Members of an effective advisory committee for an instructional program are selected primarily, but not solely, for their occupational expertise.

Industry perspective

18. Members of an effective advisory committee are aware of broad industry trends and prevailing social and economic issues.

Peer recognition

19. Members of an effective advisory committee have the respect and recognition of their colleagues and associates.

Interest in student and program well-being

20. Members of an effective advisory committee are aware of the program area being advised and show a genuine interest in its vitality and the well-being of its students.

Commitment

21. Members of an effective advisory committee commit sufficient time to participate in the work of the committee and attend its meetings.

Membership diversity

22. The diversity of membership of an effective advisory committee is representative of:

    a. Gender, disability, age, race, and ethnicity;

    b. All occupational levels within the industry;

    c. Program students and graduates;

    d. Organized labor;

    e. Company types, sizes, and structures;

    f. Trade, professional, and civic organizations;

    g. Community-based organizations and social service agencies;

    h. Rural, suburban, and urban communities; and

    i. Other secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.

Staff participation

23. An effective advisory committee includes among the participants in its meetings the instructional staff affiliated with the program being advised.

IV. Working Together as a Group: Solving Problems, Making Decisions, Planning, Forecasting Trends, and Anticipating the Future

Knowledge and skills

24. An effective advisory committee uses established techniques for group problem solving and decision making.

25. An effective advisory committee uses established processes and procedures for short-range and long-term planning.

26. An effective advisory committee uses appropriate techniques for futuristic forecasting and anticipatory planning.

Facilitator competencies

27. An effective advisory committee uses a facilitator for problem-solving, decision-making, forecasting, and the full range of planning activities.

28. The facilitator of an effective advisory committee demonstrates knowledge and competency in the following skills:

    a. Observation,

    b. Listening,

    c. Evaluation, and

    d. Feedback.

Recommendation process

29. An effective advisory committee operates under collegiate policy that addresses the development, presentation, and response process relative to committee recommendations for continuous curricular improvement.

Group ownership

30. The members and staff of an effective advisory committee express a positive sense of ownership in the work of the committee.

V. Making Meetings Work: Nuts and Bolts of Managing a Meeting

Preliminary planning considerations

31. The meetings of an effective advisory committee are held at times and locations most accommodating to the majority of the members.

32. The meeting facility, furnishings, equipment, and other amenities are provided to accommodate the needs of a diverse membership.

Procedural considerations

33. An effective advisory committee begins and ends its meetings at the appointed times.

34. An effective advisory committee stays on both task and process.

35. An effective advisory committee allows sufficient time to transact its business.

36. An effective advisory committee uses established rules and procedures in the transaction of its business.

37. An effective advisory committee allows for the full and open discussion of issues, including controversial ones.

38. An effective advisory committee allows sufficient time to learn and use group processes and skills for curricular review.

39. An effective advisory committee allows sufficient time to learn and use group processes and skills for problem solving, decision making, forecasting, and the full range of planning activities.

Essentials between meetings

40. An effective advisory committee follows up and follows through on all its work.

Meeting calendar

41. An effective advisory committee meets according to a calendar designed for the timely development, implementation, and evaluation of its workplan.

Meeting purpose and agenda

42. A meeting of an effective advisory committee has a stated purpose and a published agenda designed to achieve the stated purpose.

43. The agenda for a meeting of an effective advisory committee is developed by the program staff and college administration on the basis of advice and counsel given by committee members.

Meeting notice

44. The notice of a meeting of an effective advisory committee tells committee members all the pertinent information they need to schedule and to attend the meeting.

Meeting minutes

45. An effective advisory committee uses an established format to organize and report the written proceedings of its meetings.

Membership roster

46. The membership roster for an effective advisory committee is current, complete, and accurate.

Member role and responsibilities

47. The primary job of a member of an effective advisory committee is to advise on the curriculum.

Inappropriate meeting behavior

48. An effective advisory committee deals effectively and immediately with inappropriate meeting behavior.

Meeting evaluations

49. An effective advisory committee has a process in place to analyze its own effectiveness and uses the process and the information obtained to improve its operation.

VI. Developing an Advisory Committee Workplan: Drawing the Road Map

Committee workplan

50. An effective advisory committee develops, implements, and evaluates a biennial workplan to provide on-going evaluation and consultation on the curriculum to keep it current with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values identified by industry representatives as being necessary for students to learn and use in order to work effectively in their chosen fields.

APPENDIX

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18 December 1990

REFERENCE LIST

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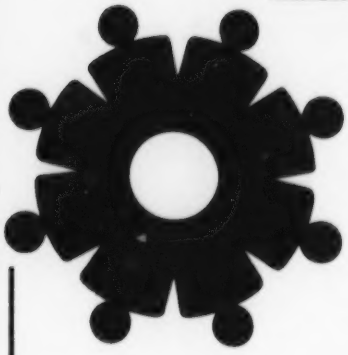

The logo of the State Council on Vocational Technical Education is an abstract representation of the citizen-councilors assembled at a round table. Designed by a commercial art student at Alexandria Technical College, the design was selected in 1982 from 69 entries submitted by vocational students in Minnesota's high schools, secondary cooperative centers, and technical colleges. The Council made its selection on the basis of a recommendation by a panel of representatives from the graphic arts, public relations, and media industries in Minnesota.

Purpose of the Council

The State Council on Vocational Technical Education is designed to further public-private collaboration for the advancement of quality vocational programs responsive to labor market needs. Established in 1969 and designated as a state agency in 1985, the Council comprises 13 members appointed by the Governor. Seven members represent the private sector interests of agriculture, business, industry, and labor. Six of the members represent vocational technical education institutions, career guidance and counseling organizations, special education, and targeted populations.

The Council advises the Governor, the State Board of Technical Colleges, the State Board of Education, the Governor's Job Training Council, the business community, the general public, and the U.S. Secretaries of Education and Labor. The Council advises on development of the annual state vocational plan; provides consultation on the establishment of program evaluation criteria and state technical committees; analyzes the spending distribution and the availability of vocational programs, services, and activities; reports on the extent to which equity to quality programs is provided targeted populations; recommends procedures to enhance public participation in vocational technical education; recommends improvements that emphasize business and labor concerns; evaluates the delivery systems assisted under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); and advises on policies that the state should pursue to strengthen vocational technical education, as well as initiatives that the private sector could undertake to enhance program modernization.

To enhance effectiveness in gathering information, the Council holds at least one town meeting each year at which the public is encouraged to express its concern about vocational technical education in Minnesota. To enhance its effectiveness in providing information, the Council publishes a quarterly newsletter, an annual directory, and a biennial report. These publications as well as project and activity reports are available to the public.

Information on the date, time, and location of meetings and other activities is available by calling the Council Offices at 612/296-4202.

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